



Explore Laguna Beach's History

Here are some notable dates throughout Laguna Beach history. When you spot "EXPLORE IT:" – you can experience the significance first hand.

500 B.C.: Native Americans lived in the area in and around Laguna, which they called "Lagonas" (for "lake") more than 2,000 years ago.

EXPLORE IT: Take a Native American History Tour to discover how the Tongva tribe (Los Gabrielinos) made their home here. View historical landmarks, touch artifacts, walk the beach and hear a bullroarer. www.mothernaturewalkingtours.net

1871: Joseph Thurston came to Aliso Canyon with his family in November 1871 when he was 3 years old and was one of the first settlers in Laguna Beach.

1876: William H. Brooks homesteaded 169 acres of the territory in 1876 near Arch Beach. He later sold it for \$50.

1878: The first known painting of Laguna Beach was created.

1888: The original wooden structure of Hotel Laguna was built; it was reconstructed in 1930 with its current Mission Revival style.

Late 1800s: Laguna Beach became a popular tourist destination.

1903: Painter Norman St. Clair arrived from San Francisco, and within a few years, Laguna Beach had a permanent population of 300 people, half of which were artists who had come here to capture the stunning seaside landscapes.

1904: Laguna Beach was established as a City.

1918: Artist Edgar Payne opens one of the city's first art galleries, which drew about 2,000 visitors in its first month of operation. The community established the Laguna Art Association (which later became Laguna Art Museum – one of the first museums in the state) to promote and support the fine arts.

EXPLORE IT: Browse Laguna Art Museum to view changing exhibits and the permanent collection. Unlike any other of its kind in the state, it collects only California art (from the 19th century to present day.) Closed Wednesdays. www.lagunaartmuseum.org

1920: The Laguna Playhouse was founded. It is one of the oldest continuously operating not-for-profit theaters on the West Coast. Serving more than 100,000 patrons each season, the Laguna Playhouse has featured many talented performers on stage, including Leslie Caron, Val Kilmer, Ed Asner, Hershey Felder, Linda Purl, Davis Gaines, Donna McKechnie, Rita Rudner, violinist Joshua Bell, Lee Rocker, ballerina Misty Copeland, Harrison Ford and Bette Davis. EXPLORE IT: The Laguna Playhouse showcases live performances, play readings and is noted for its artistic excellence, wide-ranging performing arts programming, award-winning youth education offerings and community partnerships. www.lagunaplayhouse.com

1921: Villa Rockledge, once known as Mariona, was given its name by Southern California developer Frank A. Miller, as a gift to his wife, Marion. Sitting atop a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, its facade combines Mediterranean and Spanish revival design elements. Construction details include Cotswold doors, whimsical chimneys, leaded glass, unusual tiles, two stone towers and a Mission Bell. None of the 23 rooms in the eight-unit structure are exactly alike. Although completed in 1921, a unit in the northern wing was added in 1929. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

1923: The Murphy-Smith Bungalow (today's Historical Society) was built at 278 Ocean Ave. Laguna Beach memorabilia is displayed in the bungalow, decorated in the style of a 1920s beach cottage. This is one of the few original remaining houses in the downtown area.

1926: A medieval-appearing Norman-style tower was built off Victoria Street and was designed to provide a spiral staircase as beach access from the cliffs above. Former resident Harold Kendrick once hid gold coins and treasures within the tower for children to find. Today the tower is closed, but remains a popular landmark.

EXPLORE IT: Visitors should be cautious when exploring the tower which is on rocky terrain, and are advised to check the tide schedule, as it is accessible only at low tide.) Pick up a tide table at the Official Visitors Center, 381 Forest Ave., Laguna Beach.

www.VisitLagunaBeach.com

1927: Laguna Beach was incorporated on June 29th of this year.

1932: Artist and vaudevillian Lolita Perine staged the first Festival of Arts show near Hotel Laguna, hoping to draw some additional business to town after the Los Angeles Olympic Games. It was originally named "The Living Picture Show."

EXPLORE IT: With its new welcoming facade, the Festival of Arts – California's Premier Fine Art Show takes place July 5 - Aug. 31, 2016. California's longest-running outdoor fine art exhibition features original artwork by 140 award-winning artists from Orange County, Calif. 650 Laguna Canyon Road. www.foapom.com

1933: The first work in the city's Public Art Collection was created: A bronze sculpture titled "Boy and Dog" by artist Ruth Peabody, was installed across the street from Laguna Art Museum.

EXPLORE IT: Public Art graces Laguna Beach all around town. Pick up a colorful brochure and map at the Official Visitors Center, 381 Forest Ave., Laguna Beach to begin your self-guided tour of more than 80 artworks. www.VisitLagunaBeach.com

1933: The oldest human remains in the Western Hemisphere – 17,000 years old – were found in Laguna Beach by Howard Wilson

1935: Roy Ropp, a local construction worker, Realtor and amateur artist, expanded Lolita Perine's concept and developed the festival performance into its present-day format. Ropp renamed the new and improved event "The Spirit of the Masters," and continued to design and produce it with resounding success until 1941.

1936: "The Spirit of the Masters" was renamed yet again, for the last time, the "Pageant of the Masters."

EXPLORE IT: Arguably one of the most unique productions in the world, audiences are dazzled by 90 minutes of tableaux vivants ("living pictures") that are faithful re-creations of classical and contemporary works of art. The 2016 theme "Partners," sets out in search of stories of compelling collaborations that led to the creation of unforgettable artworks. Takes place July 7 - Aug.31, 2016 in the Irvine Bowl. 650 Laguna Canyon Road. www.PageantTickets.com

1948: The Surf & Sand Resort opened and its restaurant Towers (now Splashes Restaurant) became popular with a long list of notable personalities that included Peter Ustinov, Joe Namath and Billy Graham.

1966: The Sawdust Art Festival was launched as a revolt against the local art establishment. The artists, whose first protest exhibition would later become the Sawdust Art Festival, objected to what they saw as a rigid and counterproductive jury system that excluded many talented artists. The Sawdust Art Festival opened its doors in 1967.

EXPLORE IT: Celebrating 50 years in 2016, the annual Sawdust features artwork created only in Laguna Beach by 200 local, Laguna Beach artisans. Exhibitors represent a wide variety of media. Takes place June 24 - Aug. 28, 2016. 935 Laguna Canyon Road.
www.SawdustArtFestival.org

1967: The Laguna Art-A-Fair held its first event. This festival showcases a community of artists who gather every summer in Laguna Beach for what has become Southern California's fastest growing art festival. Hundreds of artists compete each February to be a part of this internationally juried festival which now features more than 100 fine artists and master craftspeople.

EXPLORE IT: View fine art by 125 renowned artists and master craftspeople. Takes place June 24 - Aug. 28, 2016. www.Art-A-Fair.com

1999: The first Plein Air Painting Invitational took place.

EXPLORE IT: This annual weeklong event celebrating 18 years, turns Laguna Beach into an outdoor artist's studio by showcasing 40 of the nation's top plein air landscape painters. Takes place throughout Laguna Beach, Oct. 8-16, 2016. www.lagunapleinair.org

2003: The Montage Resort & Spa officially opened in Laguna Beach.

EXPLORE IT: The resort spans 30 acres offering panoramic Pacific Ocean views. Walk down the pathway to beautiful Treasure Island Park, with public art, easy beach access, and stunning sunset vistas. Colorful botanicals include pink bougainvillea, purple pride of Madeira and birds of paradise. www.montagelagunabeach.com

2005: caDance (now Laguna Dance Festival) launched its first dance festival.

EXPLORE IT: Laguna Dance Festival comes to Laguna Playhouse Sept. 21-25, 2016. Since its inception, Laguna Dance Festival has presented companies such as Complexions Contemporary Ballet, The Parsons Dance Company, Hubbard Street 2, Trey McIntyre Project and Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, among others. Additionally, it has showcased the world's most exciting talents from the Broadway stage, TV and screen, including principal dancers from The Joffrey Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, New York City Ballet and The San Francisco Ballet.
www.lagunadancefestival.org

2006: The Shops at the Old Pottery Place opened on the previously renowned Pottery Shack site.

EXPLORE IT: Eight interesting destinations in the Old Pottery Place range from dining/gourmet foods and a chocolatier to fashion, home decor, beauty and an independent bookstore: Sapphire Restaurant and Pantry, Blue Eyed Girl Boutique, Chocolate Soldier, Laguna Beach Books, Nuance, Tootsies and Vogue.

2006: The award-winning Nix Nature Center opens and is the Laguna Coast Wilderness Park headquarters and entryway to the 20,000-acre South Coast Wilderness area.

EXPLORE IT: Many park activities start at the center, including five hiking trails, mountain bike rides, birding, fitness hikes, children's programs and special weekend events. Guided hikes range from family-oriented and tot walks to moonlight treks. www.lagunacanyon.org

2011: A sculpture, "Semper Memento," by Jorg Dubin incorporating two metal beams salvaged from the World Trade Center debris is installed in Heisler Park. It also references the two other sites inextricably linked to the Twin Towers: The Pentagon and the Pennsylvania field where Flight 93 crashed.

2015: Festival of Arts and Pageant of the Masters completed a new facade and entryway to the Festival grounds. Constructed at a cost of \$3.5 million, it was finished just in time for the 83-year-old premier art exhibit's opening the first week in July. Newport Beach-based Bauer Architects won an award of merit from the American Institute of Architects' Orange County Chapter for its innovative and thoughtful design.

Hollywood Meets the Beach

Did you know these notable people called Laguna Beach home?

Actors

- Charlie Chaplin
- Bette Davis
- Robert Englund (Freddy Krueger)
- Douglas Fairbanks Jr.
- Mike Farrell and Judy (Hayden) Farrell ("MASH")
- Judy Garland
- Sterling Holloway
- Rock Hudson
- Tab Hunter
- Dianne Keaton
- Heather Locklear and Richie Sambora
- Fredric March
- Victor Mature
- Kent McCord (Adam-12)
- Bette Midler
- Ozzie and Harriet Nelson
- Mary Pickford

Athletes

- Hobie Alter (surfing)
- Lindsay Davenport (tennis)
- Janet Evans (swimming)
- Tom Harmon (football)
- Rick Leach (tennis)
- Tom Morey (invented the Boogie Board)
- Lefty Williams

Artists

- Frank Cuprien
- Joseph Kleitsch
- Edgar Alwin Payne
- William Wendt
- Wyland (Robert)

Musicians and Singers

- Frieda Belinfante (conductor and founder of the OC Philharmonic)
- Marion Hutton (sang with the Glenn Miller Orchestra/sister is Betty Hutton)
- Ricky Nelson
- Jack Norworth (wrote "Take Me Out to the Ballgame")
- Lee Rocker (The Stray Cats)

Writers

- M.F.K. Fisher (culinary writer)
- Hedda Hopper
- John Steinbeck

Other

- Buzz Aldrin
- Warren Buffet
- Ron Burkle (business magnate)
- Lauren Conrad (star of MTV hit "Laguna Beach: The Real Orange County" that was filmed here)
- Christine Fugate (film director and writer)
- Richard Halliburton (adventurer/author)

- John Mills Houston (U.S. Congressman)
- Eiler Larsen
- Timothy Leary
- Greg MacGillivray
- Peter Navarro (professor at UCI Merage School of Business/author and director of “Crouching Tiger,” a documentary)
- Robert A. Schuller
- Peter Uberroth

Lights, Camera, Action!

Laguna Beach has become known worldwide for the MTV hit cable television show “Laguna Beach: The Real Orange County.” There are also some movies that have been filmed in and around town:

“**Dead to Me,**” starring Christina Applegate

“**Savages,**” an Oliver Stone film starring John Travolta, Benecio Del Toro, Uma Thurman and Blake Lively (2012)

“**The Death and Life of Bobby Z,**” starring Paul Walker, Laurence Fishburne and Olivia Wilde (2007)

“**Boxboarders!,**” directed by local resident Rob Hedden (2007)

“**Dating Games People Play,**” by O.C. director Stefan Marc (2005)

“**A Few Good Men,**” starring Tom Cruise, Jack Nicholson and Demi Moore (1992)

“**Beaches,**” starring Bette Midler and Barbara Hershey (1988)

“**Mr. Hobbs Takes a Vacation,**” starring James Stewart (1962)

“**A Star is Born,**” starring Judy Garland (1954)

“**The Long, Long Trailer,**” starring Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz was filmed where Montage Laguna Beach sits today (1953)

“**Now, Voyager,**” starring Bette Davis and Paul Henreid (1942)

“**Treasure Island,**” starring Wallace Beery and Jackie Cooper (1934)

About Visit Laguna Beach

Visit Laguna Beach is a 501 (c)(6) not-for-profit destination marketing organization that promotes Laguna Beach as a premier leisure and small meeting destination. Formed in 1986, Visit Laguna Beach is celebrating 33 years of commitment to Laguna Beach and the tourism industry, with its offices located at 361 Forest Avenue, Suite 200 and the Official Visitors Center at 381 Forest Ave. The Visitors Center is open daily, Monday - Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, visit www.visitlagunabeach.com. Get social with @VisitLaguna on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Be sure to use our citywide hashtag #MyLagunaBeach.

About Laguna Beach

Laguna Beach is Southern California’s premier coastal destination located midway between Los Angeles and San Diego and along the southern coast of Orange County. Known as home to hundreds of local artists, and set amid 20,000 acres of wilderness, Laguna Beach is primarily served by John Wayne Airport Orange County (SNA) located just 20 minutes away.

###